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Secretary of State Rubio says purge of USAID programs complete, with 83% of agency's programs gone

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Monday the Trump administration had finished its six-week purge of programs of the six-decade-old U.S. Agency for International Development, and said he would move the 18% of aid and development programs that survived under the State Department. Rubio made the announcement in a post on X. It marked one of his relatively few public comments on what has been a historic shift away from U.S. foreign aid and development, executed by Trump political appointees at State and Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency teams.

Rubio in the post thanked DOGE and "our hardworking staff who worked very long hours to achieve this overdue and historic reform" in foreign aid. President Donald Trump on Jan. 20 issued an executive order directing a freeze of foreign assistance funding and a review of all of the tens of billions of dollars of U.S. aid and development work abroad. Trump



U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio visits the Abrahamic Family House in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Feb. 19, 2025.

charged that much of foreign assistance was wasteful and advanced a liberal agenda. Rubio's social media post Monday said that review was now "officially ending," with some 5,200 of USAID's 6,200 programs eliminated. Those programs "spent tens of billions of dollars in ways that did not serve, (and in some cases even harmed), the core national interests

of the United States," Rubio wrote. "In consultation with Congress, we intend for the remaining 18% of programs we are keeping ... to be administered more effectively under the State Department," he said. Democratic lawmakers and others call the shutdown of congressionally-funded programs illegal, saying such a move requires Con-

gress' approval. The Trump administration has given almost no details on which aid and development efforts abroad it spared as it mass-emailed contract terminations to aid groups and other USAID partners by the thousands within days earlier this month. The rapid pace, and the steps skipped in ending contracts, left USAID supporters challeng-

Associated Press

ing whether any actual program-by-program reviews had taken place. Aid groups say even some life-saving programs that Rubio and others had promised to spare got the termination notices, such as emergency nutritional support for starving children and drinking water serving sprawling camps for families uprooted by war in Sudan. Republicans broadly have made clear they want foreign assistance that would promote a far narrower interpretation of U.S. national interests going forward. The State Department in one of multiple lawsuits it is battling over its rapid shutdown of USAID had said earlier this month it was killing more than 90% of USAID programs. Rubio gave no explanation for why his number was lower. The dismantling of USAID that followed Trump's order upended decades of policy that humanitarian and development aid abroad advanced U.S. national security by stabilizing regions and economies, strengthening alliances and building goodwill. □

Homeland Security overhauls asylum phone app now it's for 'self-deportation'

By The Associated Press

The Trump administration has unveiled an overhauled cellphone app once used to let migrants apply for asylum, turning it into a system that allows people living illegally in the U.S. to say they want to leave the country voluntarily. The renamed app, announced Monday and now called CBP Home, is part of the administration's campaign to encourage "self-deportations," touted as an easy and cost-effective way to nudge along President Donald Trump's push to deport millions of immigrants without legal status.

"The app provides illegal aliens in the United States

with a straightforward way to declare their intent to voluntarily depart, offering them the chance to leave before facing harsher consequences," Pete Flores,



Venezuelan migrant Yender Romero shows the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) One app on his cell phone, which he said he used to apply for asylum in the U.S. and is waiting on an answer, at a migrant tent camp outside La Soledad church in Mexico City, Monday, Jan. 20, 2025, the inauguration day of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Associated Press

the acting commissioner for U.S Customs and Border Protection, said in a statement. Moments after Trump took office, the earlier version of the app, CBP One, stopped allowing migrants to apply for asylum, and tens of thousands of border appointments were cancelled. More than 900,000 people were allowed in the country on immigration parole under CBP One, generally for two years, starting in January 2023. The Trump administration has repeatedly urged migrants in the country illegally to leave. "The CBP Home app gives aliens the option to leave

now and self deport, so they may still have the opportunity to return legally in the future and live the American dream," Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said on the social platform X. "If they don't, we will find them, we will deport them, and they will never return." Some people living in the U.S. illegally chose to leave even before Trump's inauguration, though it's unclear how many. But earlier mass crack-downs on illegal immigration most famously a quasi-military operation in the mid-1950s that Trump has repeatedly praised also drove many immigrants in the U.S. legally to leave. □

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EPA froze 'green bank' funds worth billions, climate group suit says

By MICHAEL PHILLIS and
MATTHEW DALY

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A nonprofit that was awarded nearly \$7 billion by the Biden administration to finance clean energy and climate-friendly projects has sued President Donald Trump's Environmental Protection Agency, accusing it of improperly freezing a legally awarded grant.

Climate United Fund, a coalition of three nonprofit groups, demanded access to a Citibank account it received through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, a program created in 2022 by the bipartisan Inflation Reduction Act and more commonly known as the green bank. The freeze threatens its ability to issue loans and even pay employees, the group said.

"The combined actions of Citibank and EPA effectively nullify a congressionally mandated and funded program," Maryland-based Climate United wrote in a Monday court filing. In a related action, the Coalition for Green Capital, a separate group that received \$5 billion from the Biden-era program, sued Citibank Monday, alleging breach of contract over the refusal to disburse the grant funds awarded by the EPA.

"Citi's actions have blocked CGC from deploying funds appropriated by Congress for energy projects to lower electricity costs and provide clean air and water for all Americans," the Washington-based group said in a statement.

The two nonprofits are among eight groups tapped by then-EPA Administrator Michael Regan to receive \$20 billion to finance tens of thousands



EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin speaks at the East Palestine Fire Department in East Palestine, Ohio, Feb. 3, 2025.

of projects to fight climate change and promote environmental justice. The money was formally awarded in August.

While favored by congressional Democrats, the green bank drew immediate criticism from Republicans, who routinely denounced it as an unaccountable "slush fund." Regan sharply disputed that claim.

The bank was quickly targeted by EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin, who was confirmed to the role in late January. In a video posted on X, Zeldin said the EPA would revoke contracts for the still-emerging program. Zeldin cited a conservative journalist's undercover video made late last year that showed a former EPA employee saying the agency was throwing "gold bars off the Titanic" presumably a reference to spending before the start of Trump's second term.

Zeldin has repeatedly used the term "gold bars" to accuse the Greenhouse Gas

Reduction Fund's recipients of misconduct, waste and possible fraud.

According to the lawsuit filed in federal court, Citibank cut off access to Climate United's bank account on February 18 an action the bank did not explain for weeks. Another The cutoff took place as Zeldin made multiple public appearances accusing Climate United and other groups of misconduct, eventually announcing that the funds were frozen, according to the lawsuit. Climate United said the EPA has refused to meet with the group.

Several Democratic lawmakers slammed Zeldin's attacks on the green bank as a "sham investigation and unsubstantiated funding freeze."

The Trump administration's "baseless attacks on these investments will only cost jobs, increase prices and harm our communities," Maryland Sen. Chris Van Hollen, Massachusetts Sen. Ed Markey and Michigan

Rep. Debbie Dingell said in a statement Monday. The three Democrats pushed for creation of the green bank.

Citibank said it was reviewing the Climate United lawsuit.

"As we've said previously, Citi has been working with the federal government in its efforts to address government officials' concerns regarding this federal grant program," the bank said in a statement Monday. "Our role as financial agent does not involve any discretion over which organizations receive grant funds. Citi will of course comply with any judicial decision."

The EPA declined to comment, citing pending litigation.

In its court filing, Climate United pointed to the resignation of a former prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Washington office after refusing demands from top Trump administration officials to freeze the group's assets.

Zeldin raised questions in

a letter to the agency's watchdog about the EPA's use of Citibank to hold the money, a structure that allowed the eight entities to be used as "pass throughs" for eventual grant recipients. The process undermined transparency, Zeldin alleged.

He also questioned the qualifications of some of the entities overseeing the grants and said some were affiliated with the Biden administration or Democratic politics, including Stacey Abrams, a former Democratic nominee for Georgia governor. Trump singled out Abrams over her ties to the green bank in his address to Congress last week.

In a letter to EPA officials on March 4, Climate United disputed Zeldin's allegations. The group's lengthy application material is publicly available and the EPA used a rigorous selection process, Climate United said, adding that its spending is transparent.

In addition to Climate United, the new fund has awarded money to other nonprofits, including the Coalition for Green Capital, Power Forward Communities, Opportunity Finance Network, Inclusiv and the Justice Climate Fund. Those organizations have partnered with a range of groups, including Rewiring America, Habitat for Humanity and the Community Preservation Corporation.

The green bank represents ideas the Trump administration doesn't like: fighting climate change and helping communities that are often low-income or majority-Black and Hispanic, according to Ilmi Granoff, a climate finance expert at the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University. □

L.A. district attorney says he won't support resentencing the Menendez brothers because they lied

By **CHRISTOPHER WEBER**

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The district attorney of Los Angeles County said Monday that he does not support the resentencing of Lyle and Erik Menendez because the brothers have repeatedly lied about why they killed their parents at their Beverly Hills home in 1989.

District Attorney Nathan Hochman told reporters his decision hinged on whether the brothers' had exhibited "insight and complete responsibility" into lies told during their trial, including their original claim that they did not kill their parents. He said their repeated argument that they killed their parents in self-defense does not match the facts of the case that showed premeditated steps to plan the killings and make it look like a gang hit.

"They have lied to everyone for the last 30 years," Hochman said.

Hochman compared the Menendez case to that of Sirhan Sirhan, who shot and killed U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. He noted that, like the Menendez brothers, Sirhan had many letters of support and was determined to be a low-risk inmate. However, Gov. Gavin Newsom blocked his parole in 2022, saying Sirhan



This combination of two booking photos provided by the California Department of Corrections shows Erik Menendez, left, and Lyle Menendez.

still poses an unreasonable threat to the public.

Hochman called it an "instructive case" because, like Sirhan, the Menendez brothers "fell short" of taking full responsibility for their crimes.

The county's top prosecutor said he would support resentencing in the future if the brothers "finally come clean with the court, with the public, with the DA's office, with their own family members and acknowledge all these lies." He

acknowledged the siblings have taken positive steps toward rehabilitation, including earning advanced degrees and repeatedly scoring low on inmate risk assessments.

A resentencing hearing initiated by a court has been scheduled for later in March.

Family members of Erik and Lyle Menendez slammed Hochman's assertion that the brothers do not meet the standards for resentencing.

"Let's be clear: Erik and Lyle are not the same young boys they were more than 30 years ago," the Justice for Erik and Lyle Coalition said in a statement Monday. "They have apologized for the horrific actions they took. They have apologized to us. And, they have demonstrated their atonement through actions that have helped improve countless lives. Yet, DA Hochman is effectively asking for them to publicly apologize to a checklist of

actions they took in a state of shock and fear."

Hochman, who took office in December, said last month that he opposed a new trial for the Menendez brothers. The siblings, who are now in their 50s, were sentenced to life in prison without parole after being convicted in 1996 of the murders of their entertainment executive father Jose Menendez and mother Kitty Menendez.

In October, then-District Attorney George Gascón recommended the brothers be resentenced to 50 years to life, which would make them immediately eligible for parole. Hochman called his predecessor's recommendation a "desperate political move."

The pair began their bid for freedom in recent years after new evidence of their father's sexual abuse emerged, and they have the support of most of their extended family.

In addition to pursuing resentencing, they have also submitted a clemency plea to Newsom, who had said he would not make a decision until Hochman reviewed the case. The governor last month ordered the state parole board to investigate whether the brothers would pose a risk to the public if they are released. □

Associated Press

Elon Musk claims X being targeted in 'massive cyberattack' as service goes down

By **MICHELLE CHAPMAN**
and **BARBARA ORTUTAY**

AP Business Writers

Hours after a series of out-



Workers install lighting on an "X" sign atop the company headquarters, formerly known as Twitter, in downtown San Francisco, on Friday, July 28, 2023.

Associated Press

ages Monday that left X unavailable to thousands of users, Elon Musk claimed that the social media platform was being targeted in a "massive cyberattack."

"We get attacked every day, but this was done with a lot of resources," Musk claimed in a post. "Either a large, coordinated group and/or a country is involved. Tracing ..."

Complaints about outages spiked Monday at 6 a.m. Eastern and again at 10 a.m., with more than 40,000 users reporting no access to the platform, according to the tracking website

Downdetector.com. By afternoon, the reports had dropped to the low thousands.

A sustained outage that lasted at least an hour began at noon, with the heaviest disruptions occurring along the U.S. coasts. Downdetector.com said that 56% of problems were reported for the X app, while 33% were reported for the website.

It's not possible to definitively verify Musk's claims without seeing technical data from X, and the likelihood of them releasing that is "pretty low," said

Nicholas Reese, an adjunct instructor at the Center for Global Affairs in New York University's School of Professional Studies and expert in cyber operations.

Reese said the likelihood that a state actor is behind the outages "doesn't make a lot of sense" given their short duration unless it was a warning for something larger to come.

"There are kind of two types of cyber attacks there are ones that are designed to be very loud and there are ones that are designed to be very quiet," he said. □

Ontario slaps 25% tax increase on electricity exports to US in response to Trump's trade war

By ROB GILLIES

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Ontario's premier, the leader of Canada's most populous province, announced that effective Monday it is charging 25% more for electricity to 1.5 million Americans in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war. Ontario provides electricity to Minnesota, New York and Michigan.

"I will not hesitate to increase this charge. If the United State escalates, I will not hesitate to shut the electricity off completely," Ontario Premier Doug Ford said at a news conference in Toronto.

"Believe me when I say I do not want to do this. I feel terrible for the American people who didn't start this trade war. It's one person who is responsible, it's President Trump."

Ford said Ontario's tariff would remain in place despite the one-month reprieve from Trump, noting a one-month pause means nothing but more uncertainty. Quebec is also considering taking similar measures with electricity exports to the U.S. Ford's office said the new market rules require any generator selling electricity to the U.S. to add a 25% surcharge. Ontario's government expects it to generate revenue of \$300,000 Canadian dollars



Ontario Premier Doug Ford holds a news conference regarding the new tariffs that the United States has placed on Canada, at Queen's Park in Toronto on Tuesday, March 4, 2025.

Associated Press

(\$208,000) to CA\$400,000 (\$277,000) per day, "which will be used to support Ontario workers, families and businesses."

The new surcharge is in addition to the federal government's initial CA\$30 billion (\$21 billion) worth of retaliatory tariffs have been applied on items like American orange juice, peanut butter, coffee, appliances, footwear, cosmetics, motorcycles and certain pulp and paper products.

Trade war intensifies
Trump launched a new

trade war last week by imposing tariffs against Washington's three biggest trading partners, drawing immediate retaliation from Mexico, Canada and China and sending financial markets into a tailspin.

Trump later said he has postponed 25% tariffs on many goods from Canada and Mexico for a month, amid widespread fears of a broader trade war.

Ford estimated it will add about CA\$100 (\$69) a month to the bills of each American affected.

"It needs to end. Until these tariffs are off the table, until the threat of tariffs is gone for good, Ontario will not relent," Ford said.

Ford said Trump changes his mind every day, but if he continues to attack Canada he will do everything it takes to maximize the pain.

"Republicans, at least the ones I speak to, do not agree with President Trump but they are too scared to go out there and say it publicly," Ford said. "It's a shame but we need to end

this."

Trump has urged U.S. automakers to move auto production from Canada and Mexico to the U.S. Last week Trump granted a one-month exemption to 25% tariffs on vehicles and auto parts traded through the North American trade agreement USMCA after speaking with leaders of automakers Ford, General Motors and Stellantis. Ontario is the auto sector hub of Canada.

Premier Ford also noted Trump is threatening Canada with steel, aluminum and dairy tariffs.

"I will do whatever it takes to maximum the pain against Americans," Ford said.

Stephen Lecce, Ontario's minister of energy and electrification, said the U.S. needs Canada's power and it could impact other states as well as the three states often resale Ontario's electricity. "It is regrettable we are here," Lecce said. Ford calls for export taxes on Canadian oil

Trump's trade war and his talk of making Canada the 51st U.S. state have infuriated Canadians, who are booing the American anthem at NHL and NBA games. Some are canceling trips south of the border, and many are avoiding buying American goods when they can. □

Guatemala's Volcano of Fire erupts and forces evacuations

SAN JUAN ALOTENANGO, Guatemala (AP) — Gua-

temala's Volcano of Fire is erupting, and authorities



The "Volcan de Fuego," or Volcano of Fire, blows a thick cloud of ash, seen from Palin, Guatemala, Monday, March 10, 2025.

Associated Press

have evacuated nearly 300 families while warning that another 30,000 people in the area could be at risk. The eruption started overnight. There is no immediate report of casualties. The 12,300-foot (3,763-meter) high volcano is one of the most active in Central America. It last erupted in June 2023. The volcano spewed gas and ash far into the sky Monday, leading authorities to close schools in the vicinity and a key road connecting communities. Claudinne Ugalde, secretary of the disaster agency, said "some 30,000

people more or less are at risk in these three (jurisdictions) and we are trying to have them evacuate or self-evacuate," she said.

The biggest danger from the volcano are lahars, a mixture of ash, rock, mud and debris, that can bury entire towns.

A 2018 eruption killed 194 people and left another 234 missing.

Isaac García, 43, a resident of El Porvenir on the slopes of the volcano, had that tragedy in mind when he and his family decided to heed authorities' warnings to evacuate early Monday.

"We were a little worried because a few years ago the volcano became active," García said, referencing the 2018 eruption, as he spoke with a mask to protect against the falling ash. He came to a shelter opened in San Juan Alotenango with his mother, wife and their three children, as well as other relatives.

The volcano is 33 miles (53 km) from Guatemala's capital. The flow of volcanic material is weak to moderate but expected to increase, Guatemala's disaster agency said early Monday. □

Ukraine will propose a limited ceasefire during talks with the U.S. in Saudi Arabia, officials say

By **MATTHEW LEE and HANNA ARHIROVA**

Associated Press

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia (AP)

— A Ukrainian delegation set to meet with America's top diplomat in Saudi Arabia about ending the 3-year war with Russia will propose a ceasefire covering the Black Sea and long-range missile strikes, as well as the release of prisoners, two senior Ukrainian officials said Monday.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about Tuesday's meeting, also told The Associated Press that the Ukrainian delegation is ready during the talks to sign an agreement with the United States on access to Ukraine's rare earth minerals — a deal that U.S. President Donald Trump is keen to secure.

The officials discussed the confidence-building measures, with no further details, ahead of the Ukrainian negotiating team's meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Jeddah.

Kyiv is trying to repair the damage done when Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Feb. 28 visit to Washington descended



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Office, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, center left, meets with Prince Saud bin Mishaal, deputy governor of Saudi Arabia's Mecca region, center right, and Saudi Commerce Minister Majid bin Abdullah al-Qasabi in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Monday, March 10, 2025.

Associated Press

into an Oval Office argument with Trump and Vice President JD Vance.

At stake is the military aid and intelligence previously offered by the United States that had helped Ukraine in the war but is now paused as Washington pushes for a peace agreement.

Rubio and Zelenskyy landed a few hours apart Monday in Saudi Arabia,

though they were not expected to meet. Zelenskyy was to meet with the kingdom's powerful crown prince Monday evening. Rubio also was due to meet Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Speaking to reporters aboard his plane, Rubio said he and national security adviser Mike Waltz would take stock of Ukraine's re-

sponses in Saudi Arabia. If Ukraine and the U.S. reach an understanding acceptable to Trump, that could accelerate his administration's push to peace talks. "What we want to know is, are they interested entering some sort of peace conversation and general outlines of the kinds of things they could consider, recognizing that it has

been a costly and bloody war for the Ukrainians. They have suffered greatly and their people have suffered greatly," Rubio said. "And it's hard in the aftermath of something like that to even talk about concessions, but that's the only way this is going to end and prevent more suffering."

He added: "I'm not going to set any conditions on what they have to or need to do. I think we want to listen to see how far they're willing to go and then compare that to what the Russians want and see how far apart we truly are."

Zelenskyy has said his team meeting Rubio will include his chief of staff Andriy Yermak, Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha and Defense Minister Rustem Umerov.

Rubio will lead the U.S. team.

The rest of Europe remains skeptical about the talks as it has been sidelined by Washington.

The European Union last week agreed to boost the continent's defenses and to free up hundreds of billions of euros for security in response to the Trump administration's shift in stance on Ukraine. □

NATO chief vows 'unwavering' support for Bosnia's integrity after Serb separatist actions

By **ELDAR EMRIC**

Associated Press

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP)

— NATO's secretary general on Monday pledged the military alliance's "unwavering" support for Bosnia's territorial integrity after a series of Bosnian Serb separatist moves raised tensions nearly 30 years after the end of a bloody war.

Mark Rutte spoke in Sarajevo after meeting the three members of the Balkan country's multi-ethnic presidency, an institution established in a peace accord that ended the 1992-95 conflict among the Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats after more than 100,000 people died.

"Three decades after the Dayton Peace Agreement, I can tell you: NATO remains firmly committed to the sta-

bility of this region and to the security of Bosnia and Herzegovina," Rutte said. "We will not allow hard-

won peace to be jeopardized." Rutte called any actions that undermine the accord, the constitutional order or national institutions "unacceptable," and added: "Inflammatory rhetoric and actions are dangerous. They pose a direct threat to Bosnia and Herzegovina's stability and security." His comments came days after Bosnian Serb lawmakers passed laws that barred Bosnia's central judicial authorities and its police from operating on the territory of Republika Srpska, a Serb-run entity in Bosnia that encompasses about half the country. The other entity is a federation run by Bosniaks, who are mainly Muslims, and Croats.

The Bosnian Serb move was in response to the sentencing last month of the entity's pro-Russia President Milorad Dodik, a longtime advocate of Bosnia's disintegration. He was convicted of disobeying the top international envoy overseeing peace in the country. Dodik, a supporter of U.S. President Donald Trump who has faced U.S. and British sanctions for his separatist actions, has rejected the sentence a year in prison and a six-year ban from state office calling it anti-Serb. The U.S. and key European nations have condemned Dodik's actions, while Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed "solidarity." □



NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, left, shakes hands with the member of the Bosnian Presidency Zeljko Komsic, right, prior to the start of their meeting in Sarajevo, Bosnia, Monday, March 10, 2025.

Associated Press

Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the time, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherland Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with



only one way to generate profit at the time for the subsistence of Aruban families."

It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertainment and cultural manifestations were mostly experienced by local parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to share poetry on Sundays after church.

Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much

trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island in the mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piterrella, as well as migrant authors José

Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelkboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness within the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu,

but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/ Dera Gai (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. □


Source: *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas





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Po-Ke Ono Azure invites guests to experience their exclusive breakfast menu And don't miss their end-of-the-month brunch



ORANJESTAD – Po-Ke Ono Azure is proud to invite foodies to enjoy their exclusive breakfast menu, where guests are invited to experience mornings infused with Asian-inspired flavors, fresh ingredients, and a touch of tropical paradise.

Located at the scenic Azure Residences at Eagle Beach, Po-Ke Ono now offers an exceptional morning menu with options like the Thai Breakfast Bowl, Acai Bowl, and Asian Omelet. Designed to bring unique flavors to Aruba's breakfast scene, the menu also includes fresh coffee, mimosas, and tropical juices, perfect for pairing with the restaurant's relaxed beachside atmosphere. "Our goal was to create a breakfast experience that captures the essence of Po-Ke Ono and brings a fresh twist to mornings here at Azure," said Executive Chef Urvin



Croes, founder of Po-Ke Ono. "Each dish is crafted with care, featuring ingredients that highlight the vibrant, Asian-inspired flavors we're known for."

Available every morning at Po-Ke Ono Azure, the new breakfast lineup is ideal for early risers and those looking for a unique start to their day.

Don't miss their monthly Po-Ke Brunch!

Every end of the month, Po-Ke Ono Azure opens its kitchen for a special brunch event, where guests are invited to delight in their all-you-can-eat Asian-inspired

brunch, accompanied with free-flowing mimosas with an upgrade of champagne of your choice. The star of the brunch experience is their signature cocktail "The Albino", an

Asian-infused white sangria, made in a pitcher for guests to indulge for only \$25.

Po-Ke Ono's next brunch event will be held on March 23rd 2025.

About Po-Ke Ono Azure

Since its inception, Po-Ke Ono has quickly become a culinary landmark in Aruba, known for its signature fusion of Hawaiian and Asian flavors. With two locations across the island, Po-Ke Ono continues to innovate and delight, with Po-Ke Ono Azure offering exclusive breakfast options at the iconic Eagle Beach. □



Adriaan Laclé One of Aruba's richest men in the twentieth century

(Oranjestad)—The name Adriaan Laclé may ring a bell to locals as one of the bigger roads on the island, but about a century ago, Adriaan Laclé was a rich businessman, well-known for his generosity, wealth, and taste.

Adriaan was born in 1866 and was the eldest of six children. Not much is known about his childhood upbringing or any of his earlier business ordeals, but during his hay day he often helped people get loans, was a well-established trader, and owned several plots of land. In fact, he commissioned the construction of the famous La Quinta Carmen manor—now a restaurant. Though

he himself never lived in the beautiful manor, his own house also reflected his success and good taste. Today his house still stands in good condition and can be found in the back streets of main street Oranjestad.

Regarding his personal life, it has been said that he was married twice during his lifetime. He had his first daughter during his first marriage but lost his wife soon after her birth. During his second marriage, he fathered 16 children. However, it has been said that only 11 of those 17 made it past 18 years of age. Perhaps two of his most well-known daughters are Maria Monica Laclé

and Maria Veneranda Laclé, who went on to marry successful brothers Eloy Arends and Maximilian Arends, respectively. Their houses are still standing; Eloy and Maria Monica's mansion functions as a townhall, used to host civil marriages, while Maximilian and Maria Veneranda's house stands on the opposite side of the road to them—though currently under renovation after years left in ruin. □

Source: De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba) by Evert Bongers.

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Meet Aruba's biggest hero Boy Ecury

(Oranjestad)—This past May 4th, Aruba as well as The Netherlands commemorated those who sadly perished during the Second World War. As is known around the globe, this chapter in world history is one of the most tragic yet, and many soldiers and rebels have died on the frontline during this time.

One of those rebels who have fought against the Nazi regime, was an Aruban named Segundo Jorge Adelberto "Boy" Ecury. Born in Aruba on April 23rd, 1922, Boy spent his childhood on the island, before being sent to The Netherlands by his father when he was 15 years old to continue his studies abroad. This was in 1937, three years before WWII broke out.

During the war, he actively participated in the rebellion in The Netherlands against the Nazi regime, but his rebellious streak and constant drive to fight for justice began even before the war broke out. Being a person of color with a Haitian heritage living in The Netherlands made him vulnerable to discrimination, and this inspired him to be an activist, to stand up and fight against discrimination and oppression.

After seeing the horrific bombings of Rotterdam firsthand, he decided to join the resistance. At the same time, he was still studying and living with family in Tilburg. It was there where he met people who printed and distributed

the rebellion newspaper. This would be the first of three rebellion group that he would join throughout his 4-year service to the resistance.

Boy's primary task as member of the group was to distract the German soldiers while others ran into hiding into alleyways. This he was able to do because of his skin color and confronting demeanor. Boy also participated in the multiple sabotaging operations against the German military occupying The Netherlands. These included bombings on German military trucks and trains. The group also helped people go into hiding, as well as opened fire against allies of the Nazi regime. In these operations, Boy really stood out for his cold bloodedness.

In 1943, he received a notice to be placed for work in Germany. This he refused, of course, and went into hiding using multiple addresses in multiple cities. Because he was a wanted man, he of course could not continue to be active as a rebel. However, stubborn and naturally rebellious as he was, he always tried to join in on the operations regardless.

In 1944, after his friend Luis de Lannoy, a fellow rebel from Curacao, was arrested and executed, he moved to Delft, where he joined his third and last group in Rotterdam. During this time, he wrote a goodbye letter for his family, possibly knowing the risks of him being active

again in the big cities. Eventually, he proved himself right. On November 5th, 1944, Boy Ecury was arrested by German soldiers. He was placed in the "Oranjehotel" prison in Scheveningen, The Hague, where he was questioned. Despite being given away by an acquaintance, he himself never gave away the names of his comrades. Famously, he told his cell mate: "I will die with a smile on my face."

On November 6th, 1944, Ecury was executed. He was only 22 years old.

Ecury was buried with military honor. In 1949, the Aruban Government erected a monumental bust of him in front of what is now the linear park trail, and in 1984 he received the Resistance Memorial Cross postmortem.

Boy's life motto was this: "In my father's house, there is no place for a traitor." □



Source: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers.

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For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park. It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The enemies of the casca-

bel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cucularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting. These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the Shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color. The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and

Unique fauna of Aruba

lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction of their habitat.

Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

Conew (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigronuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Conew, has spread all over the island and has become part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Conew can live in

a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Conew has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

The Aruban Conew is an endangered species and protected by Aruban law. The Conew is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Conew can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits. Sadly, the Boas are back on the rise again with the truly wet rainy seasons we have recently experienced. This could cause a new decline in the Conew population that was just starting to recover.

These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. For more information, visit <https://www.arubanationalpark.org/main/flora-fauna/> □



A brief history of the California Light House

(Oranjestad)—At the furthest western point of the island, there lies the tallest structure on the island: The California Light House. Standing on top of a limestone cliff, this lighthouse oversees the entire island, offering one of few best views of the island and the surrounding sea. It is also one of the few monuments that hold a rich history.

The lighthouse was constructed in between 1914-1916, and its first keeper was a young trained lighthouse keeper from Curacao names Jacob Jacobs. Mr. Frederico Fingal was the last man to have occupied this position until 1962. Though his son, Mr. Romulo Fingal did not continue in his father's footsteps, he does have a special connection to the lighthouse. He sat down with our reporter and shared a bit of its history.

As Mr. Fingal explains, "In 1915, cargo donkeys were hired from Figaroa di Noord to help build the Lighthouse at Westpunt. The donkeys had to walk along the beach all the way to Westpunt carrying the cargo, poles, cement, and all these things. At that time, it was a difficult task until Aruba got its first truck. These things reflect how people could have accomplished this tremendous job with so little." Mr. Fingal said, "At that time, it wasn't a place for people to work. It was very challenging because it was full of goats and donkeys, and it was very isolated. There were no hotels



or roads to get there. There was only a donkey trail. Those were the only means of transportation."

Mr. Fingal continues, "In 1939, I was born in the lighthouse, and my father was the last

lighthouse keeper until he retired in 1962. After that, they removed the power cables all the way to the top. According to the story, we couldn't have the light ourselves because they dismantled it, and after many

years, I heard that it is in a train museum in San Nicolas, where we found this very special lens that, when the light shines through it, it reaches 30 kilometers out to sea." Mr. Fingal told our reporter.

The lighthouse has a long and very interesting history. The reason why the lighthouse was built, according to Mr. Fingal, dates back to the day when the cargo ship S.S. California sank because of the lack of light. In 1913, Aruba made a request to Curacao to build a Lighthouse at Westpunt, and the governor of Curacao responded to Aruba to come back in 1915 with a well-detailed plan. "During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, they had to wait for the light to be transported to Aruba because it was manufactured in France. At that time, there was no electricity, and the light was very interesting because it rotated with a kerosene lamp that planes used; clean kerosene," Mr. Fingal said.

Mr. Fingal discovered something very interesting about the lighthouse after much research was documented in his book 'History of the Lighthouse at Westpunt.' He found many details: "I found out that the height of the lighthouse was due to the absence of electricity. There was also the presence of coral. There is a long steel cable from where the light is, and under the light, at the highest point, there is a hanging weight, a sort of pendulum that swings like that, with a weight that

measures about 1 meter by 30 centimeters wide, which is a block of solid iron attached to a cable. When you release it upwards, it comes down, and the weight that comes down pulls it up, gradually. And while it comes down, the same weight that is descending causes many small wheels to turn in the opposite direction. The Lighthouse rotates from 6 pm in the evening, when the sun sets, until 6 am in the morning. During the entire night, the light shines on the lantern, it goes down 24 meters, and the Lighthouse is 30 meters high. It is designed not to collapse," Mr. Fingal explains.

Mr. Fingal further explains that in one night, the lighthouse rotates 4,320 times and consumes one gallon of kerosene for the whole operation. "At that time, the kerosene was supplied from the Lago refinery. Every day it was brought down, and to start the light again, they had to lift the weight up, so our job as children was to crank it and raise the weight back up in the evening when the light stuck, they would take it down again, and the light stayed down. That's how it worked for a very long time," Mr. Fingal explains.

Thanks to the Monument Fund Aruba, which worked hard and is currently in charge of the Lighthouse, Mr. Fingal is very happy with its preservation, along with all the renovations that have taken place. He hopes that the story of the lighthouse will continue to live on for future generations. □



CROSSWORD

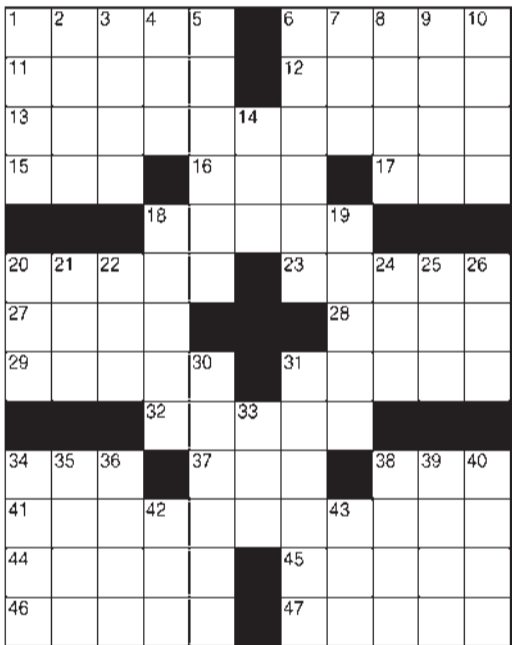
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Figure out
- 6 Wanders
- 11 Perfect
- 12 Terrible
- 13 Disk in a setting
- 15 Finish
- 16 Recipe unit
- 17 Spectrum color
- 18 Like cliffs
- 20 Singer Joplin
- 23 Rear ends
- 27 Whole range
- 28 Ring out
- 29 Doled (out)
- 31 Song
- 32 Flower part
- 34 Little rascal
- 37 Trip around the track
- 38 Sty resident
- 41 Formulaic writing
- 44 Detail map
- 45 Jacket flap
- 46 Use the rink
- 47 Midterms and finals

- 2 Thor's father
- 3 Give for a while
- 4 Mover's truck
- 5 Votes in
- 6 Drake, for one
- 7 Symbol of wisdom
- 8 Miles off
- 9 Remote button
- 10 Winter coaster
- 14 Regret
- 18 S, M, L, and XL
- 19 Eye part
- 20 Traffic snarl
- 21 Brunched
- 22 Undoing word

- 24 Got together
- 25 Butter square
- 26 Crafty setting
- 30 Take out
- 31 Mark with spots
- 33 Golf goal
- 34 Sacred bird of Egypt
- 35 Brother, of a sort
- 36 Leaning tower
- 38 One of a bear trio
- 39 Article
- 40 Some tooth-pastes
- 42 Rent out
- 43 Indulgent



3-12

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-12

CRYPTOQUOTE

KDEM VMQNZML MILD MC OYMF

GNH KMICF XN IQQM WX IF

IWNKNTG GNH FMRMC TNX.

— CNVMCX VCIHKX

Cryptoquote: YOU ARE REBORN WITH THE ROSES, IN EVERY SPRING. — JUAN RAMON JIMENEZ.

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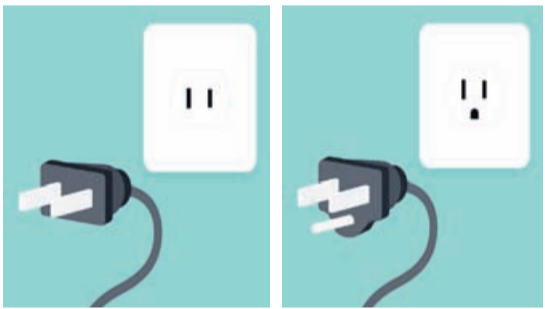
			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	10	QUEEN VICTORIA	08.00	17.00	B	1
		COSTA FORTUNA	08.00	17.30	C	1
		ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	09.00	22.00	I	1
TUE	11	ROTTERDAM	08.00	****	B	1
		CARNIVAL MAGIC	09.00	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN VIVA	13.00	21.00	I	1
WED	12	ROTTERDAM - Dept.	****	17.00	B	-
		GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	08.00	****	C	1
		CORAL PRINCESS	09.00	18.00	I	1
THU	13	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS - dept.	****	17.00	C	-
FRI	14	CLUB MED 2	08.00	13.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



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San Nicolas:

San Lucas:Tel.584 5119

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A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Movie Review: 'Eephus' is the best baseball movie since 'Moneyball'

By **JAKE COYLE**
AP Film Writer

In Carson Lund's "Eephus," two teams — the Riverdogs and Adler's Paint — gather on a neighborhood field for a baseball game. The leaves are already starting to turn "It's getting late early," as Yogi Berra said — and this is to be the final game for their adult rec league. The field is to be demolished. No one would confuse them for all-stars. A suicide squeeze unfolds in creaky slow-motion. The rotund left fielder mutters "Mother McCree" under his breath when the ball is hit in the gap. But, regardless of skill level, they all care sincerely about the game. "Eephus," as leisurely as a late-August double header, simply unfolds along with their game. Except to chase a foul ball or two, the movie stays within the lines of Soldier Field, the nondescript Massachusetts baseball field they're playing on sometime in the 1990s. It spans nine innings, with dugout chatter and fading light. In this slow-pitch gem of a baseball movie — a middle-aged "Sandlot" time is slipping away, but they're going down swinging. Money, analytics and



This image released by Music Box Films shows, from left, Jeff Saint Dic, David Torres Jr., Theodore Bouloukos, Ethan Ward, John R. Smith Jr., and Brendan "Crash" Burt in a scene from "Eephus." Associated Press

whatever's on ESPN can sometimes cloud what sports is to most people: A refuge. "Eephus," in that way, is a change-up of a baseball movie, an elegiac ode to the humbler weekend warriors who are driven by nothing but genuine affection for the game. Richly detailed and mordantly deadpan, "Eephus" adopts their pace of play, soaking up all the sesame-seed flavor that goes along with it. The title comes from an unnaturally slow pitch not slung but lobbed toward home. When I was a kid

pitching, I liked to uncork one from time to time, much to my coach's dismay. The metaphor isn't hard to grasp. One player describes it as a pitch you can get bored watching, even making you lose track of time. Much of the same applies to "Eephus," which drifts player to player, play to play, less as an ensemble piece than like a roving spectator. The guys, themselves, have no more than a handful of fans, including the diehard scorekeeper Fanny (Cliff Blake). Frederick Wiseman, the great

documentarian whose films chronicle nothing so much as institutions kept alive over time, is the voice of the announcer. I earlier called Lund's film an ode, but it's not a sentimental movie. Time's passage, which no ballgame or perfectly thrown eephus can halt, grows increasingly disquieting as the afternoon light gives way to nightfall. That, to finish the game, they play into near-total darkness, with only headlights to see the ball, is a sign of desperation as much as it is commitment. After all, one guy

in the dugout is listening to a radio broadcast of a ballgame, from 1972. What's being lost? It's not a strip mall the field is to be turned into but something harder to quibble with: a school. They could drive half an hour to another field, but that's said to be half Little League, half farmer's market. They aren't a collection of pals, either. They don't hang out away from the diamond. Things they don't talk about: work, families, politics. Things they do: eyecare for the ump. In the annals of baseball movies, "Eephus" doesn't belong in the Hall of Fame with "Bull Durham" or "A League of Their Own." The closest it gets to the big leagues is an appearance by Bill "Spaceman" Lee, the 1970s southpaw and eephus adherent. But "Eephus" is just as deserving of a place in that hardball pantheon, only in some minor ball realm, well below single A. Here, they don't throw "high cheese" but such meatballs that, as one player riffs, you could call it pasta primavera. To call this a field of dreams would be pushing it. But it's a lovely way to pass some time. □

Michelle Obama and her brother to launch a podcast with weekly guests

By **MARK KENNEDY**
AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Michelle Obama and her brother, Craig Robinson, will host a new weekly podcast series starting this month featuring a special guest pulled from the world of entertainment, sports, health and business. "IMO with Michelle Obama & Craig Robinson" will address "everyday questions shaping our lives, relationships and the world around us," according to a press release. IMO is slang for "in my opinion." Some of the guests slated to speak to the former first lady and Robinson, the executive director of the National Association of

Basketball Coaches, include the actors Issa Rae and Keke Palmer and psychologist Dr. Orna Guralnik.

Other guests include filmmakers Seth and Lauren Rogan; soccer star Abby Wambach; authors Jay

Shetty, Glennon Doyle and Logan Ury; editor Elaine Welteroth; radio personality Angie Martinez; media mogul Tyler Perry; actor Tracee Ellis Ross; husband-and-wife athlete and actor Dwyane Wade and Gabrielle Union; and Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky. The first two episodes — the first is an introductory one and the second features Rae — will premiere on March 12. New episodes will be released weekly and will be available on all audio platforms and YouTube. "With everything going on in the world, we're all looking for answers and people to turn to," Obama said in a statement. "There is

no single way to deal with the challenges we may be facing whether it's family, faith, or our personal relationships but taking the time to open up and talk about these issues can provide hope." Obama has had two other podcasts "The Michelle Obama Podcast" in 2020 and another in 2023, "The Light We Carry." Her husband, Barack Obama, offered a series of conversations about American life between him and Bruce Springsteen. The new podcast is a production of Higher Ground, the media company founded in 2018 by the former president and first lady. □



Former first lady Michelle Obama speaks at a campaign rally for democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris in Kalamazoo, Mich., on Oct. 26, 2024.

Associated Press

Christopher Bell takes a 3-race winning streak to Las Vegas with Adam Stevens in his corner

By JOHN MARSHALL

AP Sports Writer

AVONDALE, Ariz. (AP) —

Nothing seemed to be going right at the start of Christopher Bell's relationship with crew chief Adam Stevens. They struggled to get the right setups and results.

That concerned Bell, who was still early in his NASCAR Cup Series career, but Stevens wasn't worried. He previously won a championship with Kyle Busch and could see that Bell had the goods to have a successful career after moving to Joe Gibbs Racing.

"I will never forget 2021, my first year with Adam Stevens, and me and Adam got off to a rocky start," Bell said Sunday from Phoenix Raceway. "We were sitting in his office there at JGR and he looked at me and said: 'We can do this. I've won three straight sitting in these exact same two chairs,' talking about him and Kyle Busch. And he said, 'I know that we can do it.'"

Stevens was right.

Bell turned into one of the Cup Series' best drivers, earning his first win at the Daytona International Speedway road course in 2021. He has had at least two victories in each of the past four seasons and reached the Cup Series'



Christopher Bell celebrates after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Phoenix Raceway, Sunday, March 9, 2025, in Avondale, Ariz.

Championship 4 in 2022 and 2023.

Bell and Stevens went through a bit of a dry spell after winning at New Hampshire last June, but they have been nearly unstoppable at the start of the 2025 season.

Bell ended a 19-race winless streak at Atlanta, followed with a victory on the road course at the Circuit of the Americas in Texas and ran his winning streak to three straight on the flat mile oval at Phoenix Raceway on Sunday.

That's three wins on three different tracks, making Bell the first driver to win three straight races in the Next-Gen car, which debuted in 2022. He is first Cup Series driver to win three straight races since Kyle Larson in 2021 and the fourth to win three times in the first four races the first since Kevin Harvick in 2018.

"The chase (last season), we had so many opportunities and did everything we needed to do, it just didn't go our way," Stevens said. "And what we've seen this

year, (winning) three out of four times, things are going our way."

Stevens has been a big part of it. A racer growing up in Ohio, Stevens got his first break in NASCAR as a designer at Petty Enterprises in 2002 and moved to Joe Gibbs Racing in 2005. Stevens got his first shot at being a crew chief for JGR's No. 20 Xfinity car, driven primarily by Joey Logano in 2011. He teamed with Kyle Busch starting in 2015 and the pair had a successful run together, winning 19

Xfinity races and the 2015 Cup Series championship. Stevens moved to the No. 20 car to become Bell's crew chief in 2021 and, after that rocky start, started racking up checkered flags.

"Adam and Christopher are a real pair," JGR owner Joe Gibbs said. "Adam, obviously you can tell he has a gift and a crew chief. He's done the Final Four about nine times, and so just appreciate them and how hard they work."

The work has put them on the cusp of elite company. With a win this weekend in Las Vegas, Bell would become the first driver to win four straight races since Jimmie Johnson's championship year in 2007. Bell would still have a long way to go to match Richard Petty's all-time wins streak of 10 set in 1967, but being mentioned in the same breath as a seven-time Cup Series champion like Johnson is quite heady.

"That's incredibly special to hear that and know that I have that opportunity ahead of me, and we're going to do a darn good place for it," Bell said. "I'm kind of in disbelief that I have that opportunity and I'm looking forward to it." With Stevens in his corner, Bell should have a good chance of pulling it off. □

Associated Press

Stephen Curry joins alma mater Davidson as assistant GM for basketball

By STEVE REED

AP Sports Writer

DAVIDSON, N.C. (AP) —

Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry will serve as an assistant general manager for Davidson College's basketball teams. The four-time NBA champion and two-time league MVP will be the first active player in U.S. major professional sports to take an administrative job with a college team. He will continue to play with the Warriors while serving in this newly created role. Curry and his wife, Ayesha, and longtime Davidson supporters Don, Matt and Erica Berman, are creating an eight-figure fund to support the college's men's and women's basketball teams. The college asked them to serve in these advisory roles, investing their time and sharing their experience with both men's and women's basketball, according to a news release on Monday.

Curry will draw resources and support from the Under Armour global sports marketing team, one of his major sponsors. He said he wants Davidson's scholar-athletes to be able to compete in the top ranks of college athletics in an ever-changing landscape where athletes are now allowed to profit from their name, image and likeness something that wasn't available when he played there for three seasons from 2006-09.

"The Davidson experience is top notch," said Curry said, a three-time Southern Conference first-team selection at Davidson. "My journey from when I got to Davidson in 2006 to now demonstrated that I had the opportunity to play basketball at the highest level, got a great education, an amazing network through the Davidson alumni and continue to wave the Davidson flag. □



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) brings the ball up the court against the Detroit Pistons during the second half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco, Saturday, March 8, 2025.

Associated Press

NFL's tampering period arrives and a slew of stars cash in as teams fortify or retool rosters

By **ARNIE STAPLETON**
AP Pro Football Writer

DENVER (AP) — The NFL's 52-hour legal tampering period arrived Monday with a slew of stars getting big contracts following a weekend flurry that featured league MVP Josh Allen's record-setting \$330 million extension and Myles Garrett set to become the highest-paid non-quarterback ever.

Among the headliners Monday according to people familiar with the negotiations was Carolina Panthers star Jaycee Horn, who becomes the highest-paid cornerback in the NFL with a four-year, \$100 million deal that includes \$70 million in guaranteed money.

Players can't sign their deals until the new league year begins Wednesday, when teams must be under the NFL salary cap, which jumps almost \$24 million next season to \$279.2 million per club.

Limited to 22 games over his first three seasons because of injuries, Horn is coming off his first Pro Bowl after posting 68 tackles, two sacks and an interception in 15 games in 2024. Horn had one year left on his rookie contract.

Allen had two seasons left on his deal, but the Bills rewarded him after he became the franchise's first MVP since Thurman Thomas in 1991. The



Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen looks to pass during the second half of the AFC Championship NFL football game against the Kansas City Chiefs, Monday, Jan. 27, 2025, in Kansas City, Mo.

Associated Press

new contract adds two years to his deal and locks in the 28-year-old through the 2030 season. A two-time All-Pro, Allen has 76 wins, 262 total touchdowns and 30,595 total yards, the most by any NFL player through their first seven seasons in the league.

Highest Paid

Allen's deal includes \$250 million guaranteed. That's an NFL record regardless of

position. Meanwhile, Garrett is staying in Cleveland after the Browns gave him a record four-year contract extension that makes the four-time All-Pro edge rusher the highest-paid non-quarterback in NFL history.

A person with knowledge of the details told The Associated Press that Garrett's deal includes \$122.8 million guaranteed, an average annual

salary of \$40 million with a total value of \$204.8 million. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because terms weren't announced. Garrett, the 2023 AP Defensive Player of the Year, had asked for a trade last month but the Browns were adamant about keeping the 29-year-old star in Cleveland.

Quarterback Carousel

A trio of aging quarterbacks

is among the most intriguing names on the market this year. Two of them were in this same position a year ago. That's when Russell Wilson signed with Pittsburgh and Sam Darnold signed with Minnesota. Darnold had a breakout year but fizzled at the finish and Wilson did too, winning six of his first seven starts for the Steelers. Both led or maybe limped their teams into the playoffs, where the Steelers were routed by the Ravens and the Vikings were crushed by the Rams in the wild-card round a week after getting blown out in Detroit with a first-round bye up for grabs.

Aaron Rodgers isn't technically a free agent, but the Jets said they're going to jettison him this week following a disappointing two-year stint in the Meadowlands.

Two backup QBs are staying put: Jarrett Stidham agreed to a two-year, \$12 million deal to serve as Bo Nix's No. 2 in Denver, and Jimmy Garoppolo is staying with the Rams to back up Matthew Stafford. In addition to keeping Stidham, the Broncos agreed to terms on a three-year, \$39 million contract extension with defensive lineman D.J. Jones, a key cog in Denver's dominating defense. Jones' deal includes \$26 million guaranteed. □

Outfielder Lawrence Butler and Athletics finalize \$65.5 million, 7-year contract

MESA, Ariz. (AP) — Outfielder Lawrence Butler



Athletics right fielder Lawrence Butler shouts runs to catch a fly ball hit by Cincinnati Reds' Jeimer Candelario during the second inning of a spring training baseball game, Friday, Feb. 28, 2025, in Mesa, Ariz.

Associated Press

and the Athletics finalized a \$65.5 million, seven-year contract on Monday, another major investment for a team preparing to spend three seasons playing in a temporary minor league home.

The deal includes a team option for 2032 that could make the contract worth \$81.5 million and escalators that could increase the value to \$87.5 million.

A 24-year-old who was a sixth-round pick in the 2018 amateur draft, Butler was on Oakland's opening-day roster last year and was demoted to Triple-A Las Vegas on May 14 after

hitting .179 with seven RBIs in his first 41 games.

He was recalled on June 18 and batted .291 over the rest of the season, finishing with a .262 average, 22 home runs and 18 stolen bases.

Butler gets a \$3 million signing bonus, payable \$1 million within 30 days' of the contract's approval by the commissioner's office, \$1 million next Jan. 15 and \$1 million on Jan. 15, 2027.

He receives salaries of \$2.25 million this year, \$3.25 million in 2026, \$5 million in 2027, \$8 million in 2028, \$10 million in 2029, \$14 million in 2030 and \$16 million in

2031. The team option is for \$20 million with a \$4 million buyout, and the price can increase by a maximum of \$6 million based on MVP voting: \$1 million for each top six-10 finish from 2029-31 and \$2 million for each top five finish in those years. Butler earned \$627,000 last season under a split contract that paid at a rate of the \$740,000 minimum while in the major leagues and \$121,826 while in the minors. He was on track to be eligible for salary arbitration after the 2026 season and for free agency following the 2029 World Series. □